

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART 1. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Rainbow Trout Stocking a BLM Pond in Fallon County

Application Date: 5/15/2020

Name, Address and Phone Number: Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks

PO Box 1630

Miles City, MT. 59301

406-234-0925

Project Location: Fallon County, approximately 17 miles Southeast of Baker Montana;
Lat: 46.17010 Long: -104.06499; TRS: T5N R61E S22

Description of Project: Experimental one-time only stocking of rainbow trout in small BLM pond to evaluate fish survival, ability to establish a fishery, and provide a public angling opportunity in the local area.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Christina Stuart – BLM Fish Biologist in Miles City

PART 2. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats			X			X
3. Introduction of new species into an area			X			X
4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity and distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology and soil quality, stability and moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectional odors				X		
9. Historical and archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

(A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

1.2: Fish stocking in another wise fishless water can reduce the aquatic insect production from predation by rainbow trout. Tiger salamander larvae can also be displaced due to indirect competition for aquatic insects and fear of predation from larger bodied fish. Predation does occur if predatory fish species are stocked, however rainbow trout have little if any real predation on tiger salamander larvae.

1.3: Very minor impacts, mentioned in prior comment, can occur if dam breaches and fish flush into downstream habitats. The risk of this impact is very small and survival of rainbow trout in warm prairie streams, including Little Beaver Creek, is very low. This risk is not new considering two other prairie ponds (Pinnow #1 & Pinnow #2) are within the Little Beaver Creek drainage and are being stocked with rainbow trout annually.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat			X			X
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity and distribution of community and personal income				X		
7. Access to and quality of recreational activities			X			X
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution and density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments

(A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided as comments.)

2.2: If fish survive summer and winterkill there would be a small positive benefit from the new recreational opportunity provide to the local area.

2.7: Same positive benefit listed under 2.2.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? No

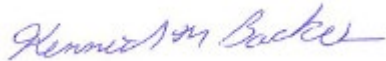
Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action when alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider. Include a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

- 1: No Action – includes not stocking fish. Angling opportunities are rare in the local area, failure to establish a fishery during this relatively wet period which has filled most ponds keeps angling opportunities low.
- 2: Stock rainbow trout. This alternative, if fish survival occurs for some period, provides local anglers and families an additional outdoor recreational opportunity close to home.

Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

This section provides an analysis of impacts to private property by proposed restrictions or stipulations in this EA as required under 75-1-201, MCA, and the Private Property Assessment Act, Chapter 462, Laws of Montana (1995). The analysis provided in this EA is conducted in accordance with implementation guidance issued by the Montana Legislative Services Division (EQC, 1996). A completed checklist designed to assist state agencies in identifying and evaluating proposed agency actions, such as imposed stipulations, that may result in the taking or damaging of private property, is included in Appendix A.

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA: Christina Stuart – BLM Fish Biologist



EA prepared by: Kenneth M Backes

Date Completed: May 15, 2020

APPENDIX A

PRIVATE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ACT CHECKLIST

The 54th Legislature enacted the Private Property Assessment Act, Chapter 462, Laws of Montana (1995). The intent of the legislation is to establish an orderly and consistent process by which state agencies evaluate their proposed actions under the "Takings Clauses" of the United States and Montana Constitutions. The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution provides: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." Similarly, Article II, Section 29 of the Montana Constitution provides: "Private property shall not be taken or damaged for public use without just compensation..."

The Private Property Assessment Act applies to proposed agency actions pertaining to land or water management or to some other environmental matter that, if adopted and enforced without compensation, would constitute a deprivation of private property in violation of the United States or Montana Constitutions.

The Montana State Attorney General's Office has developed guidelines for use by state agency to assess the impact of a proposed agency action on private property. The assessment process includes a careful review of all issues identified in the Attorney General's guidance document (Montana Department of Justice 1997). If the use of the guidelines and checklist indicates that a proposed agency action has taking or damaging implications, the agency must prepare an impact assessment in accordance with Section 5 of the Private Property Assessment Act. For the purposes of this EA, the questions on the following checklist refer to the following required stipulation(s):

DOES THE PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION HAVE TAKINGS IMPLICATIONS UNDER THE PRIVATE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ACT?

YES

NO

- | | | |
|-------|----------------|--|
| _____ | _____ <u>X</u> | 1. Does the action pertain to land or water management or environmental regulation affecting private real property or water rights? |
| _____ | _____ <u>X</u> | 2. Does the action result in either a permanent or indefinite physical occupation of private property? |
| _____ | _____ <u>X</u> | 3. Does the action deprive the owner of all economically viable uses of the property? |
| _____ | _____ <u>X</u> | 4. Does the action deny a fundamental attribute of ownership? |
| _____ | _____ <u>X</u> | 5. Does the action require a property owner to dedicate a portion of property or to grant an easement? [If the answer is NO , skip questions 5a and 5b and continue with question 6.] |
| _____ | _____ | 5a. Is there a reasonable, specific connection between the government requirement and legitimate state interests? |
| _____ | _____ | 5b. Is the government requirement roughly proportional to the impact of the proposed use of the property? |

- _____ X 6. Does the action have a severe impact on the value of the property?
- _____ X 7. Does the action damage the property by causing some physical disturbance with respect to the property in excess of that sustained by the public generally? [If the answer is **NO**, do not answer questions 7a-7c.]
- _____ _____ 7a. Is the impact of government action direct, peculiar, and significant?
- _____ _____ 7b. Has government action resulted in the property becoming practically inaccessible, waterlogged, or flooded?
- _____ _____ 7c. Has government action diminished property values by more than 30% and necessitated the physical taking of adjacent property or property across a public way from the property in question?

Taking or damaging implications exist if **YES** is checked in response to question 1 and also to any one or more of the following questions: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7a, 7b, 7c; or if **NO** is checked in response to questions 5a or 5b.

If taking or damaging implications exist, the agency must comply with Section 5 of the Private Property Assessment Act, to include the preparation of a taking or damaging impact assessment. Normally, the preparation of an impact assessment will require consultation with agency legal staff.